



MARYLAND Department of Health

MARYLAND BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

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OPEN SESSION MINUTES January 9, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Kevin Meenan called the meeting to order at 11:11am. One adjustment of the agenda - under Executive Director report - number of complaints should be 201.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Kevin Meenan, Chair; Adrienne K. Ekas, Vice Chair; Leslie Iampieri, Board Secretary/Treasurer; Stephen Liggett-Creel (absent), Board Member; Kevin Daniels, Board Member; Jamie Wilson, Board Member; Kori Olszewski, Board Member; Shannon Webb (absent, Board Member; Tonya Hill, Board Member; Barbara Tunstall, Consumer Board Member

Board Staff: Karen Richards, Executive Director; Kara Brooks-Tyson, Director of Compliance; Gail Wowk, Director of Continuing Education; Stacie Rigby, Continuing Education Associate; Mary McLaughlin, Health Occupations Investigator; Johnta Gray, Health Occupations Administrator; Ulysses Preston, Health Occupations Investigator; Jacqueline Monroe-Moore, Fiscal Administrator; Lillian Reese, Legislative and Regulations Coordinator; Lee Nyguen, Database Specialist; Marianne Graham, Director of Licensing; Deborah Evans, Licensing Coordinator; Brenda Neal, Social Worker; Kellie Peay, Administrative Assistant

Community Members: Bracha Poliakoff, LCSW-C & CE Sponsor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jamie Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes for December Open Session – no changes. Motion seconded and approved.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

- Kevin Meenan welcomed members of the public, staff, and Board members.
- Staff Appreciation: thank you to board staff for their work behind the scenes which supports the professionalism of licensed social workers in Maryland
- Legislative Authority: A motion was passed to delegate decision-making authority regarding legislative bills to the Executive Committee during the upcoming legislative session to ensure prompt responses when Lillian has a quick turnaround on a bill

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

- The Health Occupation Board Executive Directors met with the new Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Secretary on December 18th
 - She discussed her initiatives and current work at MDH
 - Desire to support Boards and maintain open communication
 - Discussion around the Board of Nursing which falls under the Secretary's office administratively, helping to address a backlog of complaints, and supporting implementation of a new IT application system
- The Board staff now have access to Gemini AI, a state-authorized system, with assurances that data entered for prompted tasks remains secure and within the state's system
- Statistical Updates

- Licensing Unit: In 2025, the unit processed 3,743 new applications and 8,141 renewals
- Complaints: There were 201 new complaints filed in 2025; 82 complaints were dismissed, while 99 were investigated
- Constituent Inquiries: The board addressed 61 constituent inquiries in 2025 through the MDH platform, with an average closure time of five days, down from six days in 2024

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Statutes and Regulations Committee

Kevin Daniels, Committee Chair

- Stats and Regs committee met on January 8, 2026.
- A petition from a member of the public regarding domestic violence disclosure was discussed. The Board's recommendation was sent to the Secretary's office who sent response to the public member on behalf of the board. The Board of Professional Counselors also submitted a response which was the same as our Board.
- On December 17, Kevin and Stephen attended a Legislative/Regulatory overview meeting with Lillian which was very helpful
- A subcommittee is reviewing regulations regarding Licensed Master Social Workers (LMSWs) in private practice, incorporating public comments from the Maryland Register
 - 1st meeting held January 6, 2026
 - Sub-committee members include Gisele Ferrato from University of Maryland and Karessa Proctor from NASW Maryland
- Legislative session starts January 14 and Lillian asks that Board members regularly check their emails

Continuing Education Committee

Adrienne Ekas, Committee Chair

- Meeting on December 4th
- The audit contract for 2025 renewals was finalized – post renewal audit for 2025
- House Bill 783 requires a one-time training on structural racism for future renewals, like the implicit bias training requirement
 - Board of Nursing to sponsor training – but not mandatory to take these
 - No information on the website
 - One time attestation at renewal
- There are now 12 board-authorized sponsors for non-profit and government agencies

ADJOURNMENT

- The board received no requests for public comments.
- The next two full board meetings will be held virtually
- Kevin made a motion to close the meeting at 11:45 a.m. Motion seconded and approved.
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Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Meenan, LCSW-C, Board Chair



Karen Richards, LCSW-C, Executive Director